

Systemic gaps in child protection, monitoring, and lack of intervention by govt and employers to safeguard vulnerable children exposed as rape and murder of migrant workers' child reported exactly one year after similar horror

CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD

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A year after rape and murder of a six-year-old from the migrant labourer community at an under-construction building in Vinayaka Layout had created a sense of alarm in the city, a similar incident has rocked the city. The rape and murder of a six-year-old, whose body was found in a drain has brutally exposed the systemic gaps in child safety in migrant settlements.

As per official data, 4,363



POCSO cases have been reported in Karnataka in 2025. "Nearly 90% of children from migrant communities remain vulnerable to such crimes. Both the victims and the accused in a large number of POCSO cases come from migrant communities, indicating that the existing approach needs a fundamental shift. Our strategy must change," said Rupa Hassan, child rights activist.

The latest case was reported from Pattandur Agrahara in Whitefield on January 6. According to police, the child had

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>

CITY / PAGE 4

ART ACHE

Walking path around lake turned into living canvas as citizens use art to express Doddagubbi Lake's pain



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|---|---|--|

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- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
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- | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
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THINGS TO DO

01 Tech talk

FICCI FLO, India's leading women-led chamber of commerce, has announced AI INDIA 2026 – Led by Women. The landmark national artificial intelligence conclave will bring together women leaders, entrepreneurs, professionals, and senior executives from 21 FLO chapters across India. **Where:** ITC Gardenia, Ashok Nagar; **When:** January 22, 10 am



02 Art exploration

As part of a series of events curated by BLR Hubba, NGMA Bengaluru is hosting Dhwani Roopa, an exploration of Sri Lankan Kandyan dance, rooted in sacred healing traditions and reimagined through contemporary form. **Where:** National Gallery of Modern Art, Palace Road; **When:** January 20, 8 pm



03 Craft junction

Karigar Bazaar returns with its 2nd Edition, promising a larger and more immersive celebration of India's craft, culture, and community, bringing together master artisans, cultural performances, experiential workshops, and regional cuisines under one heritage destination. **Where:** Jayamahal Palace Hotel; **When:** Until Jan 26, 11 am to 8 pm

04 Taste of culture

Cooks & Books brings together food, literature, and cultural dialogue, with its new edition putting the spotlight on Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada by Shahu Patole. The intimate gathering invites the city's food and literary lovers to explore one of India's most powerful culinary narratives. **Where:** Lightroom Bookstore, Cooke Town; **When:** January 23, 6.30 pm

05 Business mode on

An integrated three-day B2B expo for various hospitality sectors will feature multiple integrated exhibitions, providing direct access to manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, and solution providers across ingredients, processing technologies, bakery and kitchen equipment, packaging, cold chain, automation, hygiene, and sustainable solutions. **Where:** Tripura Vasini, Palace Grounds; **When:** January 20 to 22

Schools seek two-level Maths option in SSLC exams

Association advocates offering students choice between two levels of Mathematics exams, tailored to different learning abilities, to significantly reduce exam-related fear and anxiety

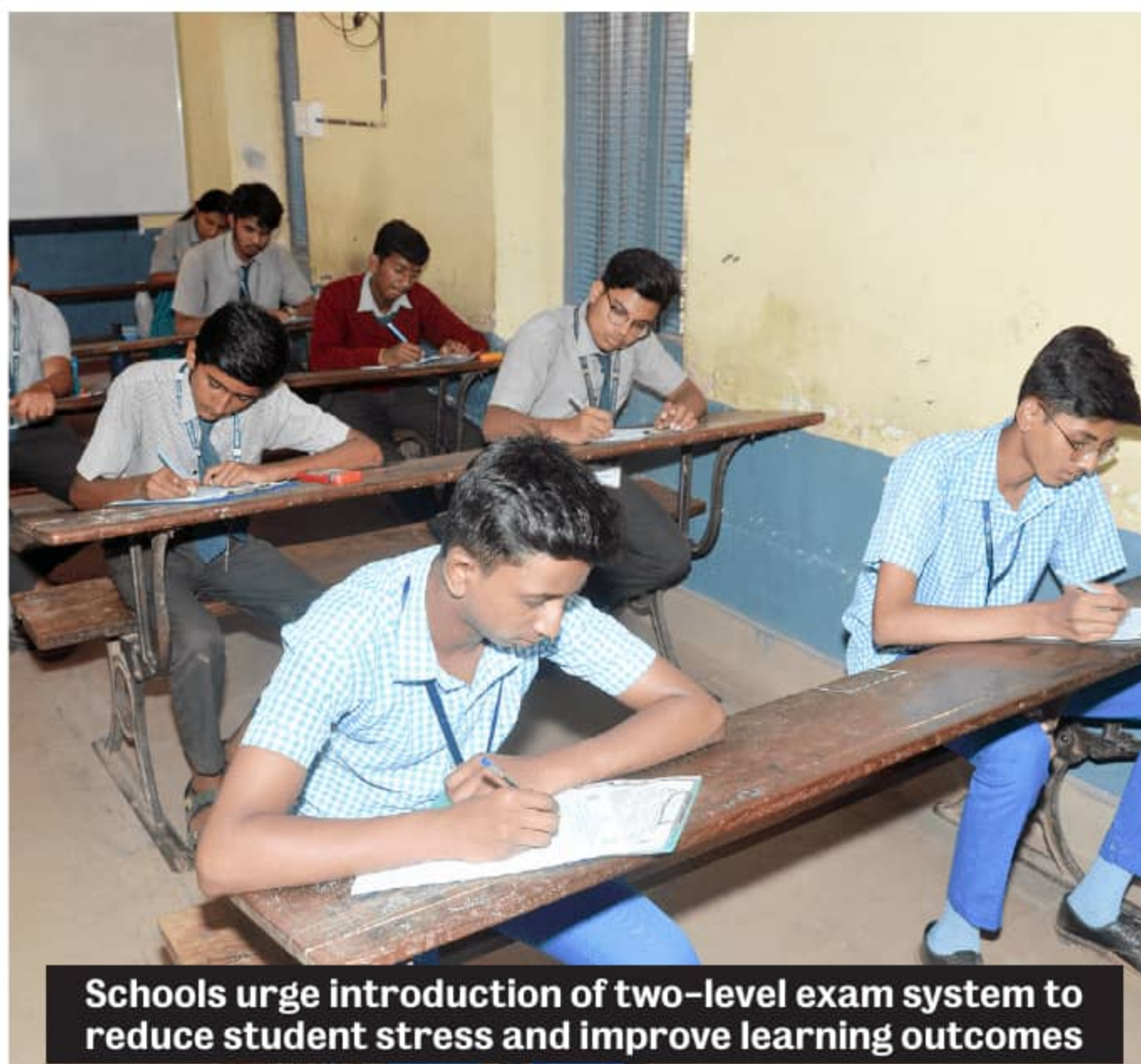
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The Associated Managements of English Medium Schools in Karnataka (KAMS) has urged the state government to introduce two levels of Mathematics in SSLC examinations under the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) from the academic year 2027–28, citing the need to reduce student stress and improve learning outcomes. Shashi Kumar D, General Secretary of KAMS said the proposal seeks the introduction of Mathematics Standard and Mathematics Basic on the lines of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) model. He said such a reform would recognise diverse student abilities while ensuring academic standards remain intact.

Student diversity

"Mathematics has consistently remained one of the toughest subjects for SSLC students and a major reason for failures year after year. Offering two levels of examination will cater to different learning abilities and significantly reduce exam-related fear and anxiety," Kumar said, adding that the move would allow students to choose the level based on aptitude and future academic plans. He pointed out that the National Curriculum Framework 2005 had clearly recommended providing choices within a sub-



Schools urge introduction of two-level exam system to reduce student stress and improve learning outcomes

ject to ensure fair and appropriate assessment for all learners. "Two levels of testing will help students perform at their true potential without compromising the integrity of the curriculum," he said.

Maths challenge

KAMS highlighted that Mathematics continues to record lower pass percentages compared to most other subjects in SSLC results, affecting lakhs of students annually. Shashi Kumar said nearly 8 to 9 lakh students appear for the SSLC examination every year, and a significant number either fail or score poorly in Mathematics. "This often leads to dropouts after Class 10, loss of confidence and restricted

academic or career opportunities. A two-level system will respect student interest, enable informed academic choices and improve overall pass rates," he said.

CBSE model

Referring to the CBSE reform introduced through a circular in 2019, Kumar said the national board had implemented Mathematics Standard for students planning to pursue the subject further and Mathematics Basic for those who do not intend to continue with it. "The key strength of the CBSE model is that classroom teaching and syllabus remain the same for all students. The choice comes only at the examination stage," he explained. He said the approach

Dual-level system will respect student interest, enable informed academic choices and improve overall pass rates, says KAMS General Secretary

has reduced failure rates and stress without diluting academic standards.

Equity demand

Kumar argued that the Karnataka State Board syllabus is broadly aligned with the NCERT curriculum and comparable with CBSE standards. "Denying State Board students the same flexibility amounts to unequal treatment across boards, despite similar academic expectations," he said.

National alignment

He said the proposal aligns with recent national education reforms that emphasise competency-based assessment, reduced high-stakes pressure and learner-centric pathways. "Introducing two levels of Mathematics at the SSLC stage is a progressive step that supports foundational numeracy while encouraging conceptual understanding," he added. KAMS has requested the government to introduce Mathematics Standard and Basic in SSLC examinations, allowing students to choose the level during registration to ensure parity between State Board and national board students.

Local blooms trump exports as flower trade shifts gears

Karnataka's floriculture industry is witnessing a clear shift this season, with growers and traders choosing local markets over overseas exports. With the Centre-backed Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) air freight subsidy of 40 per cent yet to be released and exporters facing an 18 per cent GST burden, shipping flowers abroad has become economically unviable. As a result, rose exports have dropped sharply, from an annual average of 40 to 50 lakh stems to just about 10 lakh this year, even as domestic demand rises ahead of Valentine's Day and the wedding season. A trader said, "Karnataka clocks nearly Rs 5,000 crore in



annual trade, with January and February alone accounting for around Rs 1,000 crore, largely driven by roses." While metros like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Goa continue to be major domestic destinations, traders are also shipping flowers to newer markets such as Jharkhand and Assam through Bengaluru's auction centres. At the same time, décor trends are changing, with weddings moving beyond Dutch roses to newer cut flowers like celosia, snapdragon, delphinium and trachelium, which are fetching higher prices. Growers warn that unless export subsidies are restored, the overseas flower trade may continue to wilt. — BMB

Yettinahole boost set to quench B'luru's water needs

Bengaluru's long wait for Yettinahole water is almost over. With the first phase of renovation at the Thippagondanahalli (TG Halli) reservoir completed, BWSSB says it is fully prepared to receive and treat the new supply. Of the 2.5 TMC earmarked for the city under the Yettinahole project, a major share will flow into TG Halli, a oncedry reservoir that is now being positioned as a key source to ease the capital's drinking water stress. Sources said that the Rs 291 crore project has equipped the reservoir with a 110 MLD water treatment plant, upgraded sewage treat-



ment facilities and pumping infrastructure linking western Bengaluru. Until Yettinahole water arrives, Cauvery water is being blended and treated, with quality cleared by IISc. In a first for the city, ozonation technology has been introduced at TG Halli to tackle pollution risks. Once the new supply kicks in, officials say western Bengaluru can expect a steady daily flow of treated water, offering much-needed relief to a growing city. — BMB

Ballot papers to be used for upcoming civic body elections

The Karnataka State Election Commission on Monday, announced that ballot papers will be used for the forthcoming elections to Bengaluru's municipal corporations. Unlike previous civic polls that relied on electronic voting machines, the election of corporators this time will follow the paper ballot method. The decision covers elections to the five newly constituted municipal corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority framework. These include Central, North, South, East and West Bengaluru corporations. Officials said the move has been finalised as part of the election process for the new civic structure, with arrangements now underway to conduct polls using the traditional voting system. — BMB



Man posing as cop harasses woman with threat calls to her, family

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A citizen, who had visited the police station for a case inquiry, was shocked to find that her number had been leaked and that an unknown individual started calling her, posing as a cop and making threats of arrest. The issue began when the Banashankari Police Inspector asked Sneha Rakesh, a resident of Agro-

more Layout, Vijayanagar, to come to the police station.

When she returned, a person, claiming to be a police officer attached to Byatarayanapura Police Station, called her over the phone and said that an arrest warrant was ready to be issued against her. Sneha tried to avoid him by switching off her mobile phone but he continued to call her relatives and friends using the same number and began sharing her personal information with

them.

When her friends and relatives told her about these calls, she got further alarmed. "I approached the Assistant Commissioner of Police who advised me to lodge a complaint with jurisdictional police," said Sneha.

She sent her complaint copy through her employee to the Chandra Layout Police.

"I request the Police Inspector to take action against the person who has been harassing me. The per-

Woman started getting calls from unknown number soon after she was called to police station in connection with a case inquiry

son claimed he was a police officer from Byatarayanapura Police Station. He also called my friends and relatives," the complaint reads.



Invitee at son's birthday party turns bane of man's life



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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

A father of three children received a bolt from the blue when an invitee to his son's birthday celebrations held in 2019 turned out to be his worst rival. It is alleged that the man who had come for the birthday party created a rift between the victim and his wife and also attacked him when he was questioned. The victim, Syed Asif Ulla, a resident of Arab Line in Richmond Town, is recovering from serious injuries after the attack.

Based on a complaint lodged by Asif Ulla, Adugodi police have registered a first information report (FIR) against Shoheb, Sulthan, Muvarai, and Luman under the Section 109, 3(5) of the Bhratiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.

According to the complaint, Asif Ulla's son Syed Usuf Ulla celebrated his birthday in 2019. "We had a happy family. I was working as an agent for used cars. My wife Meher Taj is a homemaker. We have three children - two boys and one girl. My son invited his friend's brother Shoheb to his birthday celebrations. Shoheb told me that he had developed a residential layout at Ramanagara and

Mother of three leaves husband after man she met at son's birthday party 'creates' rift in her family

advised me to buy a residential site. Later, Shoheb used to visit my home and he created problems between my wife and me," the complaint read.

According to the complaint, Meher Taj began distancing herself from her husband after she paid heed to rumours spread by Shoheb. "My wife began demanding a divorce to facilitate her marriage with Shoheb. She also started living separately with the children three months ago. I got a phone call from my daughter at 8.30 pm on January 13 that she and her mother are staying at her grandmother's house at Lakkasandra and have no money. I told my daughter to wait for me. I visited the area at 10.15 pm and I found my wife and Shoheb were talking to each other on the street. I asked my wife why she was talking with Shoheb but she demanded a divorce from me. Later, Shoheb and others attacked me with a steel rod and a hollow brick. Passersby shifted me to Victoria Hospital for treatment at 11 pm," the complaint read.

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Artists turn Doddagubbi Lake into living protest against pollution

Creative interventions spotlight fish kills, bird deaths and official inaction at Doddagubbi Lake, urging urgent ecological restoration

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Doddagubbi Lake, an ancient water body in north-eastern Bengaluru near the village of Doddagubbi, has become the focus of a unique initiative by local artists who are using art to draw attention to its ecological distress.

Over the past few months, the lake has been steadily deteriorating, with the water turning green and becoming unfit for fish and birds. To make the crisis visible to both the public and authorities, artists have transformed the walking path around the lake into a space for awareness through paper-mâché sculptures, illustrated handbooks and live performances, effectively turning the lake into a living canvas.

Residents living close to the lake say the decline is clearly visible. Advithi Emmi, who leads the initiative, said she visits the lake daily and has witnessed worrying changes. "I have seen birds becoming inactive and mass deaths of fish. The lake's condition is alarming, but authorities have not taken action," she said.

According to Advithi, the crisis became particularly evident around Deepavali 2025, when bubbles began appearing on the water's surface. Soon after, fish were seen gasping for air before dying. Dead birds, including cormorants, spot-



Paper-mâché birds and live performances invite walkers to confront recurring fish kills and demand accountability for worsening lake pollution

ted-billed ducks and pelicans, were later found around the lake. Similar incidents have occurred here in the past, pointing to a recurring ecological problem rather than an isolated episode.

Concerned by these developments, a small group of artists, including Mithila Baindur, Uma Agadi and Advithi Emmi, began meeting informally to understand and document what was happening. With guidance from lake practitioners such as Annapurna Kamat and support from ARRC, the group recorded unusual patterns in the lake, documented bird deaths and helped rescue distressed birds using a shared Google Form.

In December 2025, the collective launched its first art-based intervention. Artists including Annada Menon, Antara Mukherji, Dhanya Rajaram, Hementh Kumar, Mithila Baindur, Sandhya Byataraya, Srirangaraj N. C. and Uma Agadi created paper-mâché bird sculptures representing local species and placed them along the walking path. Illustrated handbooks provided in-

From sculptures to live performances, residents and artists document toxic water, mobilise walkers, and amplify scientific warnings, pressing agencies like Karnataka State Pollution Control Board to act before irreversible damage sets in

formation about the lake, while QR codes linked visitors to observation data and learning resources. Poets Jithudas T. R., Sindhu Hande, Kavya Ramineni and Joanna Shalom John recited poems, adding a reflective layer and prompting conversations among walkers about the lake's future. The second intervention, held on January 18, expanded the engagement through live performance. Artists Jeetin Rangher, Paramesh D. Jolad, Smitha Cariappe, Shiva Prasad K. T. and Sridhar performed along the path, interacting with the lake, its life forms and visitors to bring the ecological crisis into sharper focus. Paramesh said his performance, titled "Live Let Live", symbolised a bird asking for its right to live and sought to carry the public's voice to the government. He also created postcards highlighting the crisis, which were signed by local residents and intended for authorities.

Meanwhile, officials acknowledge the problem. A Kannur panchayat official said leachate from the Mittaganahalli landfill is flowing into lakes such as Chikkagubbi and Doddagubbi, polluting the water. While corrective measures are underway, officials said it may take a few months to resolve the issue fully.

Data from the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board underline the severity of the situation. Doddagubbi Lake currently falls under Class E, indicating water unfit for aquatic life or recreation. Total coliform levels stand at 6,300 MPN per 100 ml, far exceeding safe limits, while dissolved oxygen is at 3.2 mg per litre, well below levels needed to sustain fish. The group plans to continue monthly interventions, combining art, community participation and ecological awareness to maintain pressure for the lake's restoration and long-term protection.

Bengaluru's most and least voter wards

Ward No 23 of the Bengaluru West City Corporation has emerged as the most voter-dense ward under the Greater Bengaluru Authority, with 49,530 registered voters, while Ward No 16 of the Bengaluru East City Corporation has recorded the lowest voter strength at 10,926, as per the ward-wise draft electoral rolls released on Monday. State Election Commissioner G S Sangreshi said the draft rolls cover a total of 88,91,411 voters across 369 wards spread over five City Corporations Bengaluru Central, North, South, East and West. To facilitate polling under the GBA jurisdiction, 8,044 polling stations will be

set up across the city.

Prepared with October 1, 2025 as the qualifying date, the draft electoral rolls comprise 45,69,193 male voters, 43,20,583 female voters and 1,635 voters in the 'other' category. Releasing the rolls at the GBA head office, Sangreshi urged all eligible citizens aged 18 years and above to verify the inclusion of their names. Voters can submit claims and objections between January 20 and February 3, 2026, during which Booth Level Officers will conduct house-to-house verification. Claims will be processed between February 4 and February 18, with the final electoral rolls scheduled for publication on March 16, 2026. The draft rolls are available on the official GBA website, along with city corporation-wise helpline numbers to assist voters. —BMB

Leak crackdown boosts Bengaluru's water security

With summer approaching, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has shifted into alert mode, rolling out leak-control works worth ₹13.56 crore to secure Bengaluru's water supply. While reservoirs remain comfortable after last year's good monsoon, officials stress prevention is crucial as nearly one-third of treated water is lost to leaks. By strengthening the distribution network and fixing weak points, BWSSB is already saving about 354 million litres daily. AI-based robotic systems have accelerated leak detection, reducing repair time and road digging. In six weeks, over 90 leak-prone spots were fixed, alongside pipeline and valve works, ensuring steadier summer supply across high-demand residential and commercial areas citywide. —BMB

HAL airspace shuts Hosur Airport bid

The Tamil Nadu government's plan to develop an international airport at Hosur has hit another hurdle, with the Defence Ministry rejecting the proposal for a second time. The Centre reiterated that Hosur's airspace is vital for Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, citing flight testing, training and other defence operations. It warned that civilian traffic could disrupt these activities and raise national security concerns. The project was earlier ruled out due to proximity to Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, and first rejected in June 2025. Despite a revised submission in November, the Centre held firm. Tamil Nadu is weighing an appeal, alternatives. —BMB

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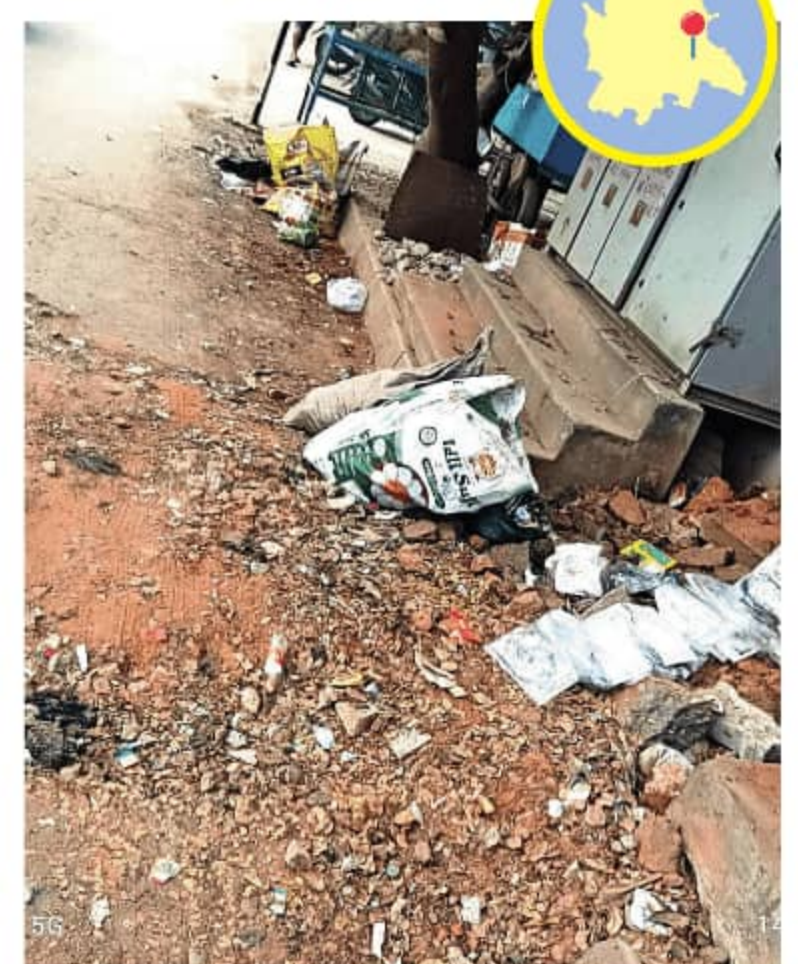
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Abandoned vehicle Madiwala



An abandoned car left unattended on Madiwala Lake Road, 4th B Cross, BTM Layout, is causing obstruction and raising safety concerns.

Pedestrian risk Amruthalli



Unrepaired Road blacktop and a dug-up footpath with damaged kerb stones on Marathalli Main Road, near Sobha HRC Pristine, hinder pedestrian movement.

Uneven road trouble Gandhi Bazaar



Cobblestones sunk below concrete slabs on Gandhi Bazaar main road make the stretch uneven, resulting in a bumpy and uncomfortable ride.

Relief to Coffee Day CEO in FEMA case

The Karnataka High Court has stayed proceedings initiated by the Enforcement Directorate under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) against Malavika Hegde, Chief Executive Officer of Coffee Day Enterprises Limited and widow of the late Café Coffee Day founder VG Sidhartha.

The interim relief was granted in connection with enforcement action arising from alleged foreign exchange violations linked to transactions carried out over a decade ago. The Enforcement Directorate had claimed that foreign investment received by the company was diverted for purposes not permitted under prevailing regulations, including the acquisition of shares in domestic entities.

Hegde approached the High Court seeking the quashing of the complaint, the show-cause notice and subsequent proceedings initiated by the adjudicating authority. She contended that the enforcement action suffered from an inordinate delay, as the transactions in question date back to 2010, while proceedings were initiated only in 2022. She

further argued that she was arrayed in the case solely in her capacity as the legal heir of her late husband, who passed away in 2019. According to her submissions, liability under FEMA cannot automatically extend to legal representatives unless personal involvement in the alleged contravention is established.

The petition also raised concerns regarding procedural fairness. Hegde claimed that the show-cause notice was not properly served and that hearing notices were issued even before her responses were examined, constituting a violation of principles of natural justice.

After hearing the preliminary arguments, the High Court granted an interim stay on all further proceedings against Hegde under FEMA. The court observed that the issues raised required detailed examination and scheduled the matter for further hearing later this month.

The stay will remain in force until the court considers the matter in greater detail and decides on the legality of the enforcement action. **-BMB**

Petitioner flags gaps in archived hearing rules

The Karnataka High Court has sought responses from its administration after a petition highlighted the absence of clear guidelines governing access to archived recordings of court proceedings that were live-streamed but not subsequently made publicly available.

The petition was filed by advocate Angad Kamath, who argued that existing rules do not adequately explain how lawyers, litigants, or researchers can obtain copies of archived live-streamed hearings. He contended that this lack of clarity has resulted in arbitrary refusals, undermining transparency in the judiciary. A single-judge bench of Justice BM Shyam Prasad issued a notice to the Registrar General of the High Court, along with the Registrar (IT) and Assistant Registrar (IT), seeking their replies. The matter has been listed for further hearing on February 6.

The petitioner approached the court after his request for a recording of a previously live-streamed hearing was rejected by the High Court's IT wing. Kamath maintained that the Karnataka Rules on Live Streaming and Recording of Court Proceedings permit designated officers to grant

access to archived recordings. However, his application was turned down on the grounds that such recordings are not considered official records unless a court specifically directs otherwise.

Challenging this reasoning, the petitioner argued that the refusal conflated restrictions on the use of recordings with the question of access. He pointed out that the rules themselves allow recordings to be shared for academic, educational, and training purposes with appropriate permission, indicating that access cannot be denied outright.

During the hearing, the court examined how the existing rules balance transparency with restrictions on circulation and misuse of recorded proceedings. While the bench declined to pass an interim order directing the preservation or release of the specific recording sought by the petitioner, it left open the possibility of such relief being sought at a later stage. The court's decision to issue a notice signals a broader examination of how live-streamed court proceedings are archived and accessed, and whether clearer procedural safeguards are required to ensure consistency, accountability, and public confidence in the judiciary. **-BMB**

BDA faces backlash for reducing layout park land

Site allottees claim reduction violates 2014 plan and benefits real estate interests

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Site allottees of Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout, who were expecting some good news from the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) on the occasion of Sankranti, were shocked to discover changes made to the proposed park, open space, and playground in the 4th Block of the layout. The site allottees attended a review meeting held on January 14.

They stated that, as per the 2014 plan, the allotment of land for the park and open space was 40 acres, which is essential for the welfare, health, and environmental needs of the allottees. Now, however, the size of the land has been reduced to 35 acres.

"We raised the issue during the meeting, but the BDA official could only provide a clarification, saying they are responsible for the total area in their possession and not for what was agreed to be reserved for each block as per the approved 2014 plan at the time of allotment. We suspect the reduction of land for the park is intended to benefit the real estate business," said Manjunath, one of the site allottees in the 4th Block.



Park land slashed, locals accuse BDA of favouring builders

Residents of Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout were stunned when the Bengaluru Development Authority trimmed the park and open space in the 4th Block from 40 acres to 35 acres. At a review meeting, allottees raised concerns, citing health, environmental, and welfare impacts

They argued that reducing the land for the proposed park in the 4th Block by five acres is a clear violation of the plan approved in 2014. "The 4th Block is the only

block in the layout that was allocated a minimum amount of land for parks and open spaces. Reducing five acres from the allotted park is not justifiable. It is

alleged that BDA engineers have advised the site allottees to make use of the land adjacent to the stormwater drain for a park or a playground. How do they expect children to play near a stormwater drain?" asked Dr Padma Prasad, whose son was allotted a site in the 4th Block.

The site allottees complain that the BDA engineers are planning to reduce the existing park for road widening, to benefit the real estate sector and individuals with vested interests, at the cost of the allottees. They submitted a letter to the BDA engineer during the meeting, urging them to restore the park area, and have also informed the BDA Commissioner.

Meanwhile, BDA Engineer Member Dr Shantharajanna stated that the BDA engineers have to adjust the plan according to the availability of the land. "There may be land litigation. The allotted land for the park will be restored once the land litigation is resolved," he said.

Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout has recently been in the limelight for the wrong reasons. The site allottees expect the BDA engineers, particularly the Commissioner, to resolve all the issues to enable them to construct their dream homes. **-BMB**

K'taka DGP faces viral scandal, denies allegations

A video purportedly showing Karnataka DGP (Civil Rights Enforcement) K Ramachandra Rao in an alleged compromising position with women went viral on social media on Monday. Rao sought to reject the videos outright, terming them "fabricated and false."

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah warned that action would be taken if the official were found guilty. The DGP's attempt to clarify his position with Home Minister G Parameshwara did not fructify.

The top police officer is the stepfather of Harshavardhini Ranya, also known as Ranya Rao, who was arrested in a sensational gold smuggling case and is currently lodged in Bengaluru Central Jail.

Kannada TV news channels also aired the blurred images of women in the video. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said, "We will get it investigated."

"I learnt about it this morning. We will initiate disciplinary action against him. No one is above the law, notwithstanding how senior the police officer is," he said, responding to the controversy surrounding the Director General of Police.

As the videos went viral, Rao rushed to meet Parameshwara, but the meeting did not take place. Speaking to reporters outside the minister's residence, he said, "I am also considering how and when it happened and who has done it. In this era, anything can happen. I have no idea about it." When reporters said that this was an old video, he said, "Old means eight years ago, when I was in Belagavi." Asked about his next course of action, he said he would discuss it with his advocate.

Rao said he didn't know how the incident occurred and would inform the Home Minister about the false information.

Karnataka Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar vowed strict action if wrongdoing was found. Senior BJP MLA S Suresh Kumar called it a "disgraceful act" tarnishing the police department, citing past misuse of Rao's position in gold smuggling. Social activist Dinesh Kallahalli demanded his suspension. **-PTI**

Festive threads turn deadly for city birds

What begins as festive fun is quietly turning lethal for birds across the outskirts of Bengaluru. Kite strings, nylon threads, torn fishing nets and discarded saree yarn dumped near lakes and open areas are trapping birds mid-flight, slicing through wings and necks, or binding their legs and beaks. Residents and activists

report several distressing cases of pigeons, egrets and other birds found struggling for days, unable to fly or feed, before succumbing to their injuries.

With rapid urbanisation already shrinking green cover and bird habitats, this new threat is pushing avian life closer to the brink. Environmentalist Chidanandamurthy

warns that unless kite-flying practices are regulated, waste threads are properly managed and dumping near water bodies is strictly stopped, the city will continue to lose its birds. He stresses that awareness of the importance of birds must go hand in hand with accountability, before the skies over Bengaluru's outskirts fall silent. **-BMB**

60% of Western Ghats in Karnataka in landslide risk zone

IIT Dharwad study flags widespread landslide susceptibility, linking heavy rainfall, steep slopes and unchecked infrastructure expansion across fragile Western Ghats districts



PICTURE FOR REPRESENTATION ONLY

Emergency stabilisation measures underway in landslide-prone Western Ghats, where steep slopes, soil type and human activity heighten failure risks

A landslide susceptibility analysis of the Western Ghats of Karnataka has highlighted that more than 60 percent of the region is prone to landslides.

The analysis, carried out across seven districts, shows that 30 percent of the landslide-susceptible area falls in Uttara Kannada district. Shivamogga accounts for 17.18 percent, Chikkamagaluru for 17 percent, Kodagu for 13.88 percent, Dakshina Kannada for 9.63 percent, Hassan for 8.26 percent, and Udipi for 4 percent of the landslide-prone area.

The study was conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT),

Dharwad, using data from multiple sources, including satellite imagery, historical landslide records, and geological, topographical, and hydrological datasets. Researchers said the findings underline the urgent need for improved monitoring systems and preventive strategies in highly vulnerable zones across the Western Ghats. According to the assessment, about 35.6 percent of the total study area falls under the high-susceptibility category, while 25.1 percent has been classified as very highly susceptible to landslides. The medium susceptibility class covers 21.24 percent of the region. In contrast, areas

A detailed assessment warns that most of Karnataka's Western Ghats face high landslide risk, urging tighter monitoring and a rethink of infrastructure projects intensifying instability in ecologically sensitive landscapes

classified as low and very low susceptibility together account for only 18.06 percent of the total study area.

"The landslide susceptibility map shows that a substantial portion of the Western Ghats in Karnataka is

vulnerable to landslides. The study identifies Uttara Kannada district as having the highest proportion of susceptible areas," the researchers noted. The study identifies rainfall, slope gradient, and soil type as the primary factors influencing landslide susceptibility. Areas receiving more than 3,000 mm of annual rainfall, having clayey loam soil, and located on slopes steeper than 28 degrees are particularly vulnerable. Experts pointed out that while natural factors play a significant role, increasing development pressure in fragile ecosystems has contributed to a rise in recent landslide events.

They warned that continued infrastructure expansion in ecologically sensitive zones could further aggravate the situation. Several large projects are proposed or underway in the Western Ghats region, including the Hubballi-Ankola railway line, widening of National Highway-52, river interlinking initiatives, and the Sharavathi Pumped Storage Project. "Mindless infrastructure development is being taken up in pristine Western Ghats areas, while local communities continue to lack basic amenities such as reliable electricity and mobile connectivity. Projects planned in such ecologically fragile regions must be dropped immediately," said Giridhar Kulkarni, a wildlife conservationist.

Supporting the findings, landslide inventory data compiled by the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre between 2006 and 2023 shows that 11 districts in the Western Ghats region recorded 1,346 landslide events in less than two decades. Uttara Kannada alone reported 588 incidents, followed by Chikkamagaluru with 214, Kodagu with 199, and Dakshina Kannada with 147.

The IIT Dharwad study also includes a case study of the Ankola landslide in Uttara Kannada in 2024. Researchers said the event was triggered by a combination of heavy rainfall and infrastructure development. Unregulated slope cutting, land-use changes, and construction activities along National Highway-66 likely added stress and vibrations to the slope, increasing the risk of failure during intense rainfall, the study concluded.

Tumakuru-Rayadurg rail link stuck after years

The much-hyped Tumakuru-Rayadurg railway project, conceived as a key backbone for a future direct Bengaluru-Ballari rail link, continues to languish even after 14 years. While Andhra Pradesh completed its portion long ago, Karnataka's stretch—cutting through Madhugiri, Koratagere and Tumakuru Rural—remains unfinished, becoming a stark symbol of missed deadlines and escalating costs. Adding to the irony, railway officials have already initiated a survey for a double line, despite the single line being far from complete, raising serious questions about planning priorities. Currently, the line has reached Pavagada, offering limited relief to border regions, with train services expected to begin up to the town shortly. Beyond Pavagada, however, progress is uneven, leaving large parts of Tumakuru district disconnected. Rail activist Arvind Kumar said prolonged delays have forced over two lakh people to migrate to cities for work. Until the line is completed, the Bengaluru-Ballari link will exist on paper.

— BMB

Trump tariff threats spark bullion rally

Gold and silver prices continue to climb steadily, with market watchers indicating the rally is far from over. Fresh tariff threats by US President Donald Trump, combined with rising global political uncertainty, have unsettled equity markets and pushed investors towards safe-haven assets. Trump's warning of a 10 percent retaliatory duty on several NATO countries, with a possible increase to 25 percent later this year, has heightened fears of wider trade disruptions. In India, the timing is particularly challenging for buyers. With the wedding season gaining momentum and industrial demand remaining strong, prices are already under pressure. Analysts cite the US-Iran standoff, the Russia-Ukraine war, and aggressive gold purchases by central banks as factors likely to keep bullion rates elevated in the near term.

— BMB



BM Trippin' Tales



Kumaraparvatha trek sees record surge under stricter safety, green rules

Trekkers flock to Karnataka's iconic peak as online bookings, wildlife-safe regulations and improved facilities reshape the high-altitude hiking experience

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Kumaraparvatha continues to emerge as one of Karnataka's most popular trekking destinations, with a sharp rise in footfall over the past three years. A total of 18,552 trekkers climbed the peak in 2024-25, compared to 12,197 in 2022-23 and 12,623 in 2023-24, according to data from the forest department.

Trekkers accessed the trail through the Bidalli check post in Kodagu's Somwarpet taluk and via the Girigadde route from Kukke Subrahmanya in Dakshina Kannada's Kadaba taluk.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre said the rising numbers clearly reflected the growing popularity of Kumaraparvatha among trekking enthusiasts.

In view of the increasing footfall, the Forest Department has tightened safety and conservation measures along the trail. From October 5, 2024, all trekking routes were brought under an online booking system through the Aranya Vihara portal. In addition, a rule mandating completion of the Kukke Subrahmanya route within a single day was enforced following a decision taken at a meeting of the Kodagu Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Foundation on June 5, 2024. The minister said the move was



Forest authorities enhance trekkers' safety with first-aid teams, drinking water points, toilets and continuous patrolling across key access routes

aimed at ensuring the free movement of wildlife and improving trekkers' safety, noting that overnight stays inside forest areas posed risks to both people and animals.

To support trekkers, drinking wa-

ter facilities have been arranged at the Subrahmanya and Girigadde check posts, while natural springs are available at four points along the trail. First-aid facilities, backed by dedicated response teams, have been set up at

both check posts. Toilets have been constructed near the Subrahmanya check post and at Girigadde, and forest guards have been deployed for regular patrolling. An authorised nature camp at Bidalli allows regulated night stays outside the forest area.

Trekking fee collections have also risen steadily, from ₹50.76 lakh in 2022-23 to ₹53.26 lakh in 2023-24 and ₹64.93 lakh in 2024-25. The funds are credited to the Kodagu Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Foundation and used for conflict mitigation, eco-tourism infrastructure, environmental development and training programmes. The minister added that a ban on single-use plastic inside forest areas has been strictly enforced since August 23, 2024, with waste collected at check posts disposed of through gram panchayats to keep the route clean.

CRIME FILES

'No updates in probe into alleged assault attempt'

A video went viral on social media where a 21-year-old woman was seen alleging that a cab driver attempted to sexually assault her while she was returning home on Diwali night. The survivor, Priyanka Kharel, a citizen of Nepal and a student of Acharya College, has filed a police complaint, but claims that no update has been provided by the authorities so far.

According to the FIR, the incident occurred on October 21, 2025, around 11.33 pm, after Priyanka finished dinner at Kalyan Nagar and booked a cab. The victim, who resides at a PG near Acharya College, stated that the driver behaved inappropriately during the ride.

When the car reached Shantinagar Road near Acharya College, the driver allegedly stopped the vehicle, moved towards the back seat, held her hands and touched her chest with sexual intent. Shocked and frightened, Priyanka managed to escape from the car and sought help from another vehicle to reach safety.

A case has been registered against the driver, and her statement has been recorded. Priyanka also shared her ordeal on social media, expressing concern over the lack of progress in the investigation and calling for stronger action to ensure women's safety in the city. **-BMB**

Man arrested for cheating under pretext of marriage

The Kengeri police have arrested 32-year-old civil engineer Vijesh B, also known as Vijay Raj Gowda, for allegedly cheating a 29-year-old woman, a software engineer, of Rs 1.53 crore under the pretext of marriage.

According to police, the victim met the accused through a matrimonial website in 2024. Vijesh allegedly presented himself as a wealthy businessman, claiming to own assets worth Rs 715 crore. Vijay allegedly claimed to own VRG Enterprises, multiple properties, lorries, and crushers, even showing documents linked to a 2019 Enforcement Directorate case to gain the family's trust. He convinced Navya that he intended to marry her and involved her family and friends in his schemes. He persuaded her to invest in a

joint business venture, gradually extorting Rs 1.75 crore while promising marriage.

Police said the accused used fabricated court documents to show that his bank accounts were frozen following ED raids, further deceiving the victim. He even brought her home to meet his family, maintaining the pretense that his wife was his sister. The victim later discovered that Vijesh was married and had a child.

When the victim demanded her money back, Vijesh reportedly returned only Rs 22 lakh and allegedly threatened her and her friends if she pursued the remaining amount. Kengeri police have registered a case under sections of cheating and criminal intimidation, and further investigations are underway. **-BMB**

Spiritual leader claims extortion by woman

65-year-old Rudramuni Swami from Sri Padakshara Math, Tiptur, filed a complaint at the CCB Police Station, accusing a woman named Spurthi of threats and extortion of Rs 4,50,000.

According to the complaint, about four to five months ago, Spurthi contacted Swami ji through a phone call claiming she had studied in a Tiptur college and was struggling to survive in Bengaluru without a job. The complainant alleged that she later demanded Rs 4.5 lakh, threatening to publicly humiliate him and harm his reputation.

The complainant stated that the accused repeatedly pressured

him to transfer money to her bank account over multiple dates. She allegedly conspired with associates for about a month, issuing threats that he must pay Rs 1 crore by January 5, or she would not leave him alive.

The complainant said the repeated harassment has taken a serious toll on his health and caused emotional distress. He has requested police protection and legal action against the accused to prevent further extortion and reputational damage. The CCB police are currently investigating the complaint, with authorities yet to confirm any arrests or the next course of action. **-BMB**

Speeding bus claims lives of mother and child

A 37-year-old woman and her eight-year-old son died on the spot after a speeding private college bus ran them over on Viveknagar Main Road on Monday morning.

The victims were identified as Sangeetha (37) and her son Parth (8), residents of Ejipura. The incident occurred around 7.15 am when Sangeetha was crossing the busy road with her son on their way to Army Public School. Sangeetha was employed at the same school, while Parth was a student there.

According to senior police officials, the private college bus was allegedly travelling at high speed

when it struck the mother and son with severe impact, killing both on the spot. The force of the collision reportedly hurled them several metres away, leaving bystanders in shock. After the accident, the bus driver abandoned the vehicle at the scene and fled. The Ashok Nagar Traffic Police seized the bus and tracked down the absconding driver. The driver, identified as Sunil (23), has been arrested.

The bodies were shifted to Bowring Hospital for post-mortem examination. A case has been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and further investigation is underway. **-BMB**

SOCIAL TATTLE

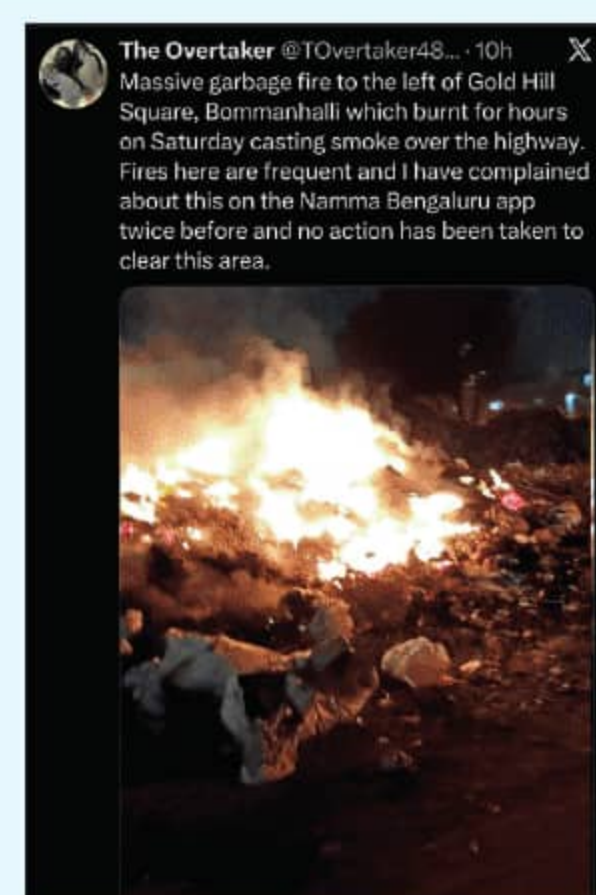
WHAT'S TWEETING



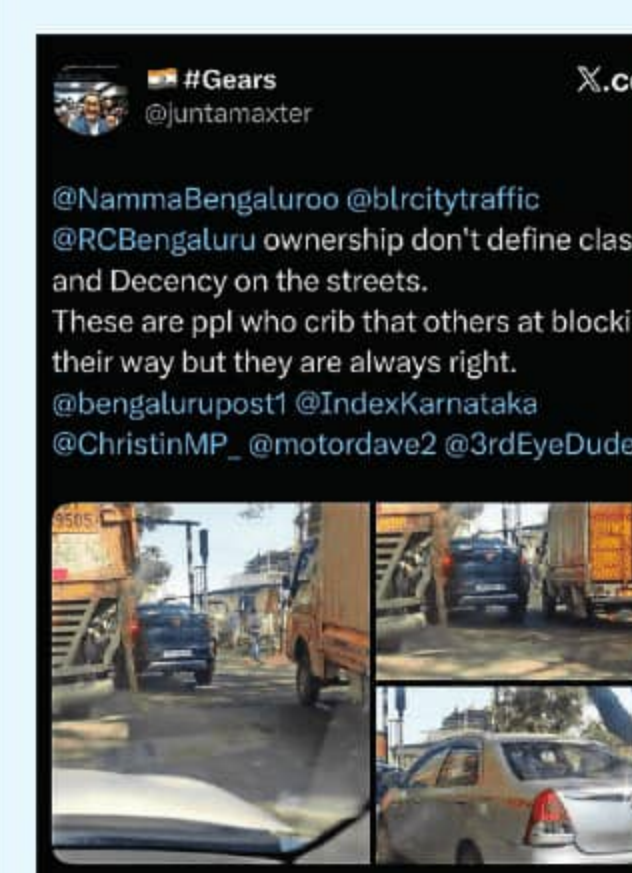
markings every two years.

A social media user highlighted that no matter who the MLA is, Jayanagar roads get asphalted with clear

Citizens highlighted on social media that a massive garbage fire near Gold Hill Square, Bommanahalli burned for hours, and repeated complaints on the Namma Bengaluru app did not lead to any action.



THAT WENT VIRAL



A platform user pointed out that ownership doesn't define class or decency on streets, as people often complain about others blocking their way while thinking they are always right.

CLOSER HOME

Nitin Nabin elected as new BJP president

45-year-old Nitin Nabin was on Monday elected unopposed as the BJP national president, the youngest ever to occupy the post as it seeks to further expand its influence in uncharted territories. Nabin, a five-term Bihar MLA, emerged as the sole candidate for the top party post with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior BJP leaders filing nomination papers in his support. Nabin will be formally declared as BJP president on Tuesday. He will succeed JP Nadda, who has been at the helm for an extended period since 2020.

"I hereby announce that only one name, that of Shri Nitin Nabin, has been proposed for the post of national president of Bharatiya Janata Party," K Laxman, the returning officer for the presidential election, said in a statement. Laxman said 37 sets of nomination papers were filed in favour of Nabin as the BJP national president and all nomination papers were found to be valid. Besides Prime Minister Modi, several other senior BJP leaders were among the proposers of Nabin's candidature. **-PTI**

SC flags concern over exorbitant rise in air fares during festivals

The Supreme Court on Monday said it would interfere with the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfares and flagged the exorbitant rise during festivals.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta termed the exorbitant rise of airfares by airlines as "exploitation" and asked the Centre and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to file their replies to a PIL seeking binding regulatory guidelines to control the unpredictable fluctuations in airfare and ancillary charges imposed by private airlines in India. "We will definitely interfere. Just see the exploitation of passengers done during the 'Kumbh' and other festivals. Just look at the fares to Prayagraj and Jodhpur from Delhi," the bench told Additional Solicitor General Anil Kaushik appearing for the Centre. Justice Mehta, in a lighter vein, told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was in the courtroom, that maybe airfares for Ahmedabad may not have increased but they have shot up for other destinations. The top court listed the matter for further hearing on February 23 after Kaushik sought time to file a reply on behalf of the Centre. **-PTI**

IN BRIEF

Second edition of Vande Mataram Coastal Cyclothon

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) will organise the second edition of the CISF Vande Mataram Coastal Cyclothon - 2026 from January 28 to February 22, aiming to raise awareness on coastal security and foster national unity and community participation. A total of 130 CISF personnel, including 65 women, will participate in the 25-day expedition, covering 6,533 km along India's mainland coastline. Participants underwent over a month of intensive training, focusing on endurance, nutrition management, cycling safety, bicycle maintenance, and performance optimisation, with guidance from professional cyclists. Two teams will start simultaneously from the western and eastern coasts, converging at Kochi, Kerala, before concluding at Kanyakumari. Along the route, the teams will visit more than 50 coastal villages, engaging with communities to sensitise them to threats such as smuggling of drugs, weapons, and explosives, while promoting vigilance and cooperation with security agencies. The event, held as part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of Vande Mataram, under the theme 'Surakshit Tat, Samridh Bharat' (Secure Coasts, Prosperous India), highlights the role of coastal security in trade, tourism, and port-led development. **-BMB**

Politician booked for minor's alleged identity reveal

An FIR was registered against former minister B Sriramulu under the POCSO and Juvenile Justice Acts for allegedly revealing the name of a minor survivor, police said on Monday. The BJP leader had revealed the identity while addressing a mega protest rally on January 17, targeting the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government in Karnataka over the deteriorating law and order in the state, in the backdrop of recent clashes in Ballari that led to the death of a person. The case was registered at the Ballari Women Police Station under Sections 23(1) and 23(2) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, and Section 74 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, police said. Reacting to the FIR, Sriramulu's close friend and MLA G Janardhan Reddy said, the case has been registered on the basis of a complaint by Ballari APMC police station inspector. **-PTI**

Lack of anganwadis, regular inspections proving too dangerous

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

gone missing on January 5 in the afternoon, following which her family approached the Whitefield police station and registered a kidnapping complaint. Preliminary investigations revealed that the suspect is a neighbour. At around midnight, her body was found in a dry canal at Nallurhalli with a plastic rope around her neck, suggesting strangulation. Initially the case was filed as kidnap and murder but later based on medical reports it was found that she was raped before she was murdered. The accused was later on arrested and police officials filed a POCSO case against him.

Systemic gaps

Advocate Rajalaxmi Ankalagi said

that poor record-keeping of migrant families, lack of regular inspections, absence of anganwadis and schools nearby, and weak follow-up mechanisms continue to put children in migrant colonies at risk. Many settlements remain outside the purview of routine welfare checks. "Migrant workers live in temporary settlements on the outskirts and move often for work. Since they are not permanent residents, they lack basic facilities and are ignored, even though they also pay taxes indirectly. Whether they are illegal migrants or legal migrants, they are humans first. They should be given basic amenities. In migrant families, both parents work, and young children are often left with siblings or alone. Without childcare or safety measures, they become vulnerable. The government must ensure



safety, awareness, and basic facilities for all," she said.

Rajalaxmi explained that in many such families, both parents work, believing more children mean more earnings. "Children below six are often left unattended and become vulnerable to abuse. Even dog bites cases are common in these areas. The government usually ignores these settlements, citing illegality, but safety should come first. Installing CCTV cameras, increasing police beats, spreading awareness about nearby health cen-

tres and anganwadis, and including these areas in welfare oversight can greatly improve conditions for marginalised migrant families," she said.

Hassan added that with several POCSO cases being reported from migrant settlements over the years, there is an urgent need to strengthen the functioning of the Child Helpline. She said district child welfare departments must take greater responsibility in creating awareness among migrant communities. "Awareness programmes are gener-

ally limited to schools and colleges. Since the covid-19 pandemic, many children from these communities have dropped out and are no longer attending school. There are lakhs of children who are out of the education system so who will reach out to them?" she asked.

She stressed that many children do not understand that what happened to them was wrong until someone explains it to them. "In such cases, not only NGOs but the government too must spread awareness. District child welfare departments must identify vulnerable areas and conduct outreach programmes. Many children don't even realise something wrong has happened to them until it is explained," she said.

Kushi Kushallappa, Enfold Proactive Health Trust, said that the responsibility does not lie with the government alone. "Companies and construction site managers, who hire migrant workers, must also be held accountable. They must ensure workers are protected and provided with proper accommodation. Employers are legally required to offer basic amenities, including food and shelter. They should also make sure that children are enrolled in and regularly attending schools or colleges," she said.

Companies and construction site managers, who hire migrant workers, must also be held accountable. Employers are legally required to offer basic amenities, including food and shelter. They should also make sure that children are enrolled in and regularly attending schools or colleges

— Kushi Kushallappa, Enfold Proactive Health Trust

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Chaithra Channakeshava W/o. Dr. Channakeshava S P, Resident at # 290 Sri Ranga, 13th Cross, Blue Jay Atmosphere 2, Andrahalli main road, Kariobanahalli, Bengaluru 560073 have changed my name to CHAITHRA C G vide Affidavit date 19.01.2026 sworn before notary R Raghunath Rao, Bangalore.

I, JOHNSON CHRISTOPHER, S/o WILSON J, R/o No 1716, 3rd cross Cristian Colony Mandya-571401. I have changed my name to KAREEM ALI FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

NAME CHANGE

I, Ramesh Billava, r/at No. 6-308, Beach Road, Hale Alive, Hangaloor Post, Udupi - 576217 have changed my name to Ramesh T Poojari vide affidavit dt. 19.01.2026 sworn before Notary Leela, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME

I, KANNUMUKKULA PADMA ARUN KUMAR, wife of ARUN KUMAR KANNUMUKKULA RAJIAIAH SETTY aged 36 years, residing at Tyagaraja Colony, Mulbagal Town. I have changed my name from Padma Devaraju to KANNUMUKKULA PADMA ARUN KUMAR sworn before P.M Sadhashivaiah, Advocate & Notary, Mulabagal vide affidavit dated: 19/01/2026

I, KHAN MUNAWWARA BEGUM NOOR AHMED, W/o REHAN ULLA KHAN, R/o Building No 19, 1st cross Lakshmi Layout, ArakereMico Layout Bannerghata Road Bangalore-560076. I have changed my name to MUNAWWARA BEGUM SURI FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE.

I, DINESH KUMAR N, Residing at No. 12, 50 Feet Rd, Near BDA Park, Muneshwara Block, Avalahalli, Bangalore - 560026, have changed my name to DINESH KUMAR, vide affidavit dated 05/01/2026, sworn before notary Venkataraju H G, Bangalore.

I, MOHAMMED SHUAIB GULZAR, R/a .No.6, Maistry Marappa St. Muniswamappa Block JC Nagar Bangalore-06. I have Changed my name to MOHAMMED SHUAIB, Vide affidavit dated 19/01/2026 Sworn before Notary Meer Hassan Bangalore

I, RANI (Old Name) W/o Ronald Varghese R/at No. 111, Hannah's Home, 1st Main Road, 4th Cross Road, Kalathur Layout, Bengaluru- 560013 have changed my name to RANI AROGYADAS vide affidavit dated: 19/1/2026 Before Notary K.V.Mani Bangalore.

I, AKMAL PASHA MOHAMED, R/a.No. 396,Near GVN School,Rahamath Nagar, Kolar -563101. I have Changed my name to AKMAL PASHA MOHAMED KHASIM, Vide affidavit ,dated 19/01/2026 Sworn before Notary : Meer Hassan Bangalore-

I Siddique Huda Mohd Tahir W/O, Mohammedafzal Khan R/o No 173, 17th Cross 2nd Right Govindpura Abdul Kalam Main Road Arabic College Post Bangalore Karnataka - 560045 have changed my name to Huda Mohamedafzal Khan.

I Nurul Hoda S/O, Hajrat Ali R/o No 2 4th Cross R Sonnappa Block J C Nagar Benson Town Post Bengaluru 560046 have changed my name to Noorul Huda.

I, Nazima Sultana, R/o Ward No. 24, No. 708/6, Keelkote Layout, Kolar - 563101, have changed my name to Nazeema Sulthana for all purposes.

I Saquib R/O Neheru street, Annapurneshwari theatre, Anekal, Bangalore-562106 I have changed my name to Saquib S for all purposes

I Saquib R/O Neheru street, annapurneshwari theatre, Anekal, Bangalore-562106 I have changed my name to Saquib S for all purposes

Fire in Brahmagiri Hills

A small fire was reported at Brahmagiri hills, on the outskirts of Bengaluru adjacent to Nandi Hills, on the late night of January 18.

According to officials from Karnataka Forest Department, the fire, over an area of three acres, was immediately identified and doused within 30 minutes.

"The incident happened after farmers in the nearby farmland were burning stubble and fire splinter spread it. It was a ground fire that burnt old grass and shrubs," said a KFD official.

However, many passers-by mistook it fire at Nandi Hills, and uploaded pictures of the fire on social media sites. —BMB



MD in anesthesiology can prescribe essential narcotic drugs for medical purposes

The Court has held that doctors holding an MD degree in Anesthesiology do not require any additional or separate training to possess, prescribe or dispense essential narcotic drugs for medical purposes such as pain relief, palliative care or opioid-based treatment.

The court clarified that an MD in Anesthesiology is a recognised postgraduate qualification under the National Medical Commission and is sufficient to meet the training requirements prescribed under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Rules for designation as a medical practitioner authorised to prescribe essential narcotic drugs.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj made the observation while allowing a petition filed by the Indian Society of Anaesthesiologists, Mangaluru branch, along with other petitioners. The challenge was directed against a communication

issued by the State Assistant Drugs Controller (ADC), who had declined to renew Registered Medical Institution (RMI) certification for certain hospitals under the NDPS Act.

The ADC had refused renewal on the ground that hospitals had designated doctors with an MD in Anesthesiology as "designated medical practitioners" under the NDPS Rules without requiring them to undergo separate training in pain relief, palliative care or opioid dependence treatment. According to the ADC, such additional certification was mandatory under Rule 52 of the NDPS Rules.

Opposing this, the petitioners argued that the postgraduate curriculum in Anesthesiology already includes training in pain management and the medical use of opioids, satisfying the requirements under the NDPS framework. They contended that insisting on separate certification

was unwarranted.

To examine the issue, the HC sought expert clarification from authorities, including the Narcotics Commissioner, officials from the Ministry of Finance's narcotics wing, and experts from the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre at AIIMS, New Delhi. Based on the responses, the court noted that the Narcotics Commissioner and the Union Government had stated that the MD Anesthesiology curriculum adequately equips doctors to handle essential narcotic drugs in compliance with Rule 52-N of the NDPS Rules. They confirmed that no additional training certificate was required beyond the PG degree.

The court also recorded that medical experts had clarified that anesthesiologists, by virtue of their specialised training in pain management, are legally competent to prescribe essential narcotic drugs. —BMB

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TAKING PARACETAMOL WHEN PREGNANT



If taken correctly, no link between drug and autism, ADHD, study confirms

If you've been pregnant in the past few months, you may have faced a dilemma. You wake up with a fever, a pounding headache or back pain – and then pause. Is it safe to take paracetamol?

That hesitation isn't surprising. In September last year, the United States government sowed widespread doubt and anxiety by linking paracetamol use in pregnancy to autism and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

But now a major new international study, published today in *The Lancet*, provides some much-needed clarity.

The research confirms that taking paracetamol – also known as acetaminophen, or by brand names such as Panadol and Tylenol – does not increase a baby's risk of autism, ADHD or intellectual disability when used during pregnancy.

Paracetamol remains a safe and effective way to treat fever and pain at any stage of pregnancy.

What the new study looked at

The researchers carried out a large systematic review and meta-analysis, meaning they did not just study one group of people. Instead, they brought together results from many previous studies.

In total, they reviewed 43 studies that focused on whether children exposed to paracetamol in the womb were more likely to later be diagnosed with autism, ADHD or intellectual disability.

Crucially, the authors prioritised sibling comparison studies. These compare siblings from the same family, where one was exposed to paracetamol during pregnancy and another was not.

This approach produces higher-quality comparative results. It helps researchers isolate what they are studying – in this case, paracetamol.

Siblings' shared genetics, home environment and family background mean there are fewer differences in these factors, which

could otherwise distort results (known as "confounding factors"). The authors used extensive statistical methods to ensure their findings were accurate.

So, what did they find?

Across these higher-quality studies, the researchers found no meaningful increase in the risk of autism, ADHD or intellectual disability in children whose mothers used paracetamol during pregnancy.

This held true when the authors (a) looked only at sibling studies, (b) focused on studies with a low risk of bias and (c) examined children followed for more than five years.

In other words, when the strongest methods were used, the earlier alarming links simply did not hold up. The study concludes that paracetamol, when used as directed, remains safe during pregnancy.

These results echo those of another landmark study in 2024, conducted in Sweden and including almost 2.5 million children born between 1995 and 2019.

This Swedish study highlighted the importance of robust controls

in scientific research.

It showed that when studies did not use sibling comparison to control for confounding factors, there appeared to be a small increased risk of autism and ADHD associated with paracetamol use during pregnancy.

However, when researchers used rigorous statistical methods in sibling studies to account for confounding factors between individuals – such as genetics or living conditions – these associations disappeared.

The Swedish study, like the current *Lancet* study, also concluded there was no evidence of an increased risk of autism, ADHD or neurodevelopmental disability associated with paracetamol use in pregnancy.

Why this is important

Paracetamol is not just another medication. It is often the only recommended option for treating pain and fever during pregnancy.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration, responsible for regulating medicine safety and quality in Australia, maintains that paracetamol remains a pregnancy "Category A" drug. This means it is safe for use during pregnancy when taken according to directions.

Being able to rely on a safe drug to reduce fever is particularly important for pregnant people.

Leaving fever untreated during pregnancy can be harmful for both the fetus and the mother. Fever has been linked to miscarriage, preterm birth and other birth complications.

So avoiding paracetamol "just in case" is not, in fact, the cautious choice. The risks of not treating pain or fever may be greater than the risks of the medication itself.

For pregnant people weighing up whether to take a tablet for a feverish night or pregnancy-related aches, this study should provide reassurance that taking paracetamol is safe and evidence-based.

Paracetamol remains, as it has for decades, the first-line option.

If you have concerns, speak to your healthcare provider.

(By Anya Arthurs, Flinders University, *The Conversation*)

MIRRORLIGHTS

Gentler radiation ahead: Australian study offers hope for women with gynaecological cancers

In a first-of-its-kind study, Australian researchers have demonstrated the feasibility and safety of using stabilised hyaluronic acid (SHA) gel during radiation treatment for gynaecological cancers.

The gel is already approved by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in prostate cancer radiation treatment.

A team led by experts from Monash University investigated hyaluronic acid gel for the first time in women, as a means of gently creating more space between the tumour and the rectum during MRI-guided brachytherapy – a type of internal radiation treatment.

By creating this space, clinicians

aimed to reduce radiation exposure to the rectum, allowing a higher dose of radiation to reach the tumour through more precise targeting, reducing damage to healthy tissue and potentially improving treatment outcomes.

"This study is a world first in exploring the potential of stabilised hyaluronic acid (SHA) gel to improve outcomes for patients undergoing brachytherapy for gynaecological cancers. Our findings show the procedure is safe, feasible and offers promising technical advantages," said Dr Carminia Lapuz from Monash University.

"By increasing the distance between the tumour and the rec-

tum, we hope to pave the way for safer, more effective treatments and greater equity in cancer care," Lapuz added. The study is published in the *Journal of Medical Radiation Sciences*.

In the small study involving 12 patients, doctors found the gel easy to use and clearly visible on MRI scans, making it simple to monitor its position throughout treatment. Importantly, patients reported no discomfort from the spacer, and no gel-related complications were observed.

The gel increased the distance between the tumour and the rectum in all 12 patients and remained safely in place throughout the

course of brachytherapy.

The gel dissolves safely in the body over time, as demonstrated by its existing use in prostate cancer treatment.

While the study did not examine long-term side effects or changes in radiation dose to the rectum, it shows that using SHA gel as a spacer is safe and feasible for patients with gynaecological cancer.

By reducing radiation exposure to healthy tissue and enabling more accurate tumour targeting, this approach has the potential to improve quality of life, minimise long-term side effects and deliver more effective cancer care for women worldwide. —IANS



All you need to know about...

Lip recovery

Dry, cracked lips can dull any lipstick. Daytime balm often isn't enough, real repair happens overnight. Adopt simple nightly habits to wake up with soft, healthy lips ready for colour. Here are ten easy fixes.

1. Layer on lip balm

Apply a thick layer of nourishing lip balm before bed. Choose formulas with shea butter, beeswax or coconut oil.

2. Seal with petroleum jelly

Lock in moisture by layering petroleum jelly over balm or honey. It prevents water loss and helps repair cracked lips overnight.

3. Gently exfoliate

Use a mild sugar-and-honey scrub once or twice a week to remove dead skin. Follow immediately with lip balm.

4. Use an overnight lip mask

Lip masks deliver deeper hydration than regular balms. Apply a generous layer before bed for smoother, plumper lips by morning.

5. Hydrate before bed

Drink a glass of water before sleeping. If you use air conditioning or a fan, a humidifier can prevent overnight dryness.

6. Apply honey

Raw honey soothes, heals and hydrates. Apply a thin layer before bed and rinse off gently in the morning.

7. Use coconut oil or ghee

Massage a small amount onto your lips at night. Both restore moisture and strengthen the lip barrier.

8. Stop licking your lips

Licking worsens dryness. Reach for lip balm instead to protect and heal the skin.

9. Soothe with aloe vera

Aloe vera calms irritation and repairs damage. Apply a light layer before bed for softer lips by morning.

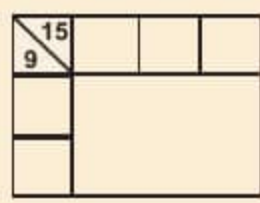
10. Sleep with a humidifier

Dry indoor air can dehydrate lips. A humidifier helps maintain moisture through the night.

—Femina

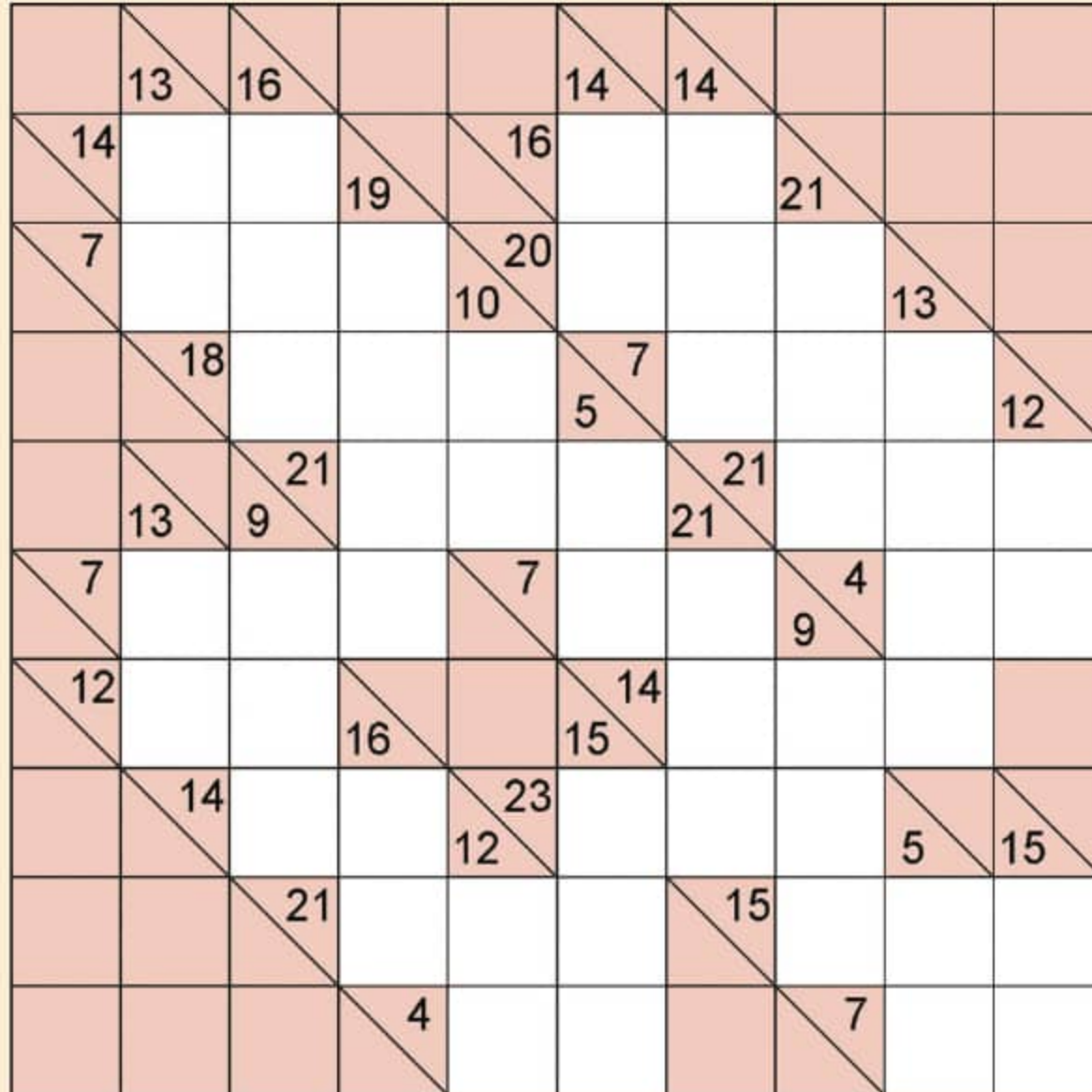
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

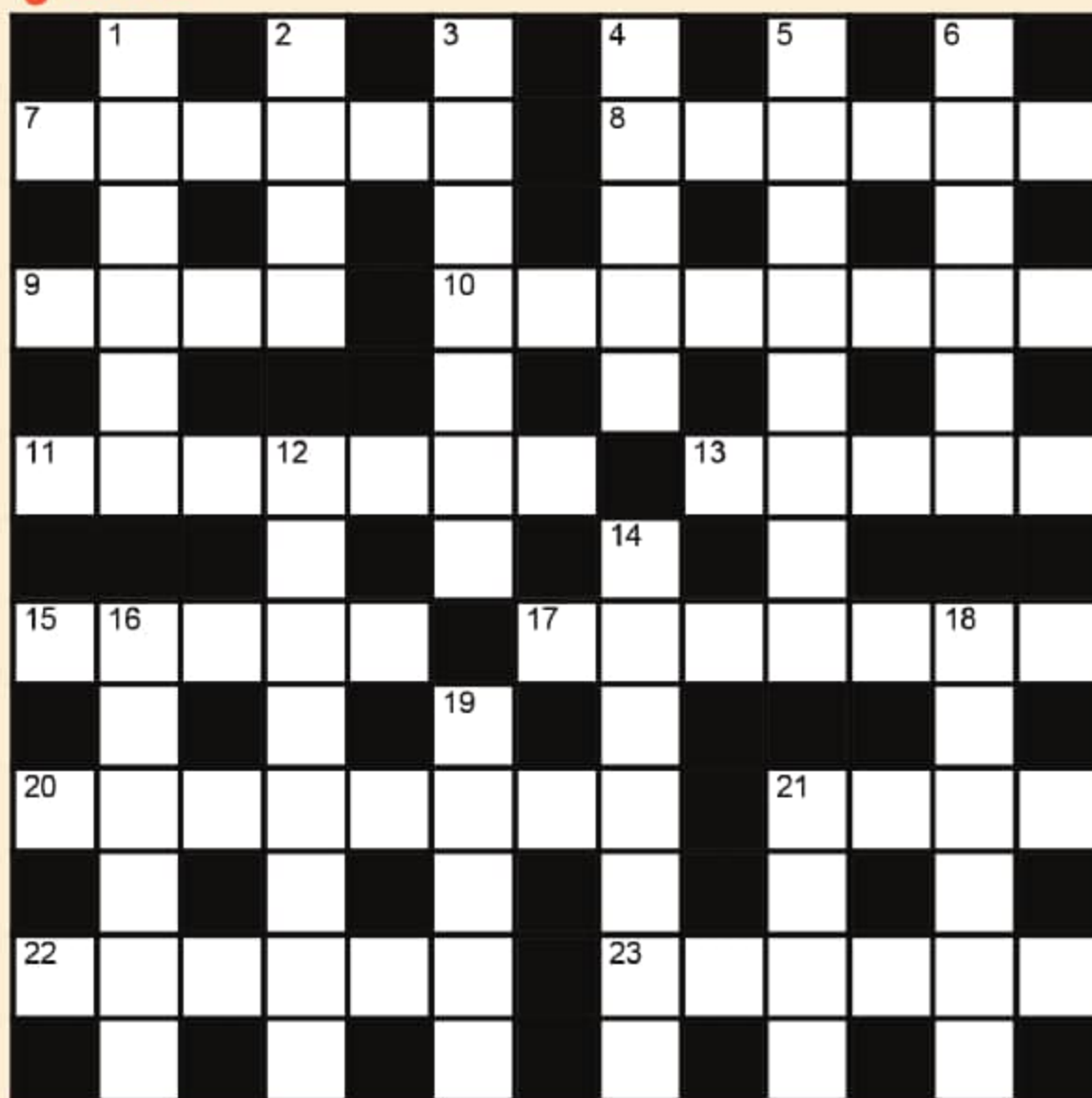


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

- 7 Former Indian paceman ____ Khan (6)
- 8 Popular vegetarian Italian restaurant on Krishna Rajendra road (6)
- 9 Expression of disgust (4)
- 10 Canadian province (8)
- 11 More brackish (7)
- 13 Man and Capri? (5)
- 15 Advanced or made progress? (3,2)
- 17 Resident of Rostov? (7)
- 20 Inhabitant of the Philippines (8)
- 21 Merry old king (4)
- 22 Upper arm muscle (6)
- 23 Capital of the Czech Republic (6)

DOWN

- 1 A town in Southern Sicily - "As a rug" anagram? (6)
- 2 Yank or pull; pluck (4)
- 3 A ring of rope (7)
- 4 English river (5)
- 5 Self-admirers (8)
- 6 Move unsteadily (6)
- 12 Traitor (3,5)
- 14 Red-nosed reindeer (7)
- 16 Inflammation of the ear (6)
- 18 With every batsman dismissed (3-3)
- 19 Wash out in water (5)
- 21 Feet of ____ : trait of a coward? (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: A EQUALS H
AN OARO UP EHHQ ZHK
VRJUME NGWDPNP UP
PNXQHV EHHQ ZHK
RMFOAUME NXP.N.



Line maro

I will give you a kiss. If you do not like it, you can return it



Mindchow

I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again



Joke of the day

Skating is the only sport where you can spend an arm and a leg to break an arm and a leg

Loop

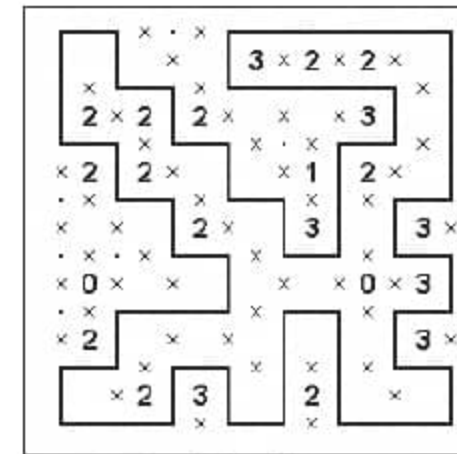
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

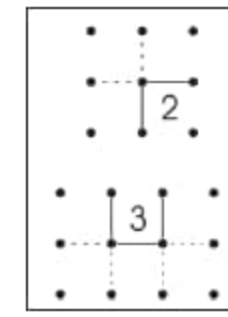
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) - Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

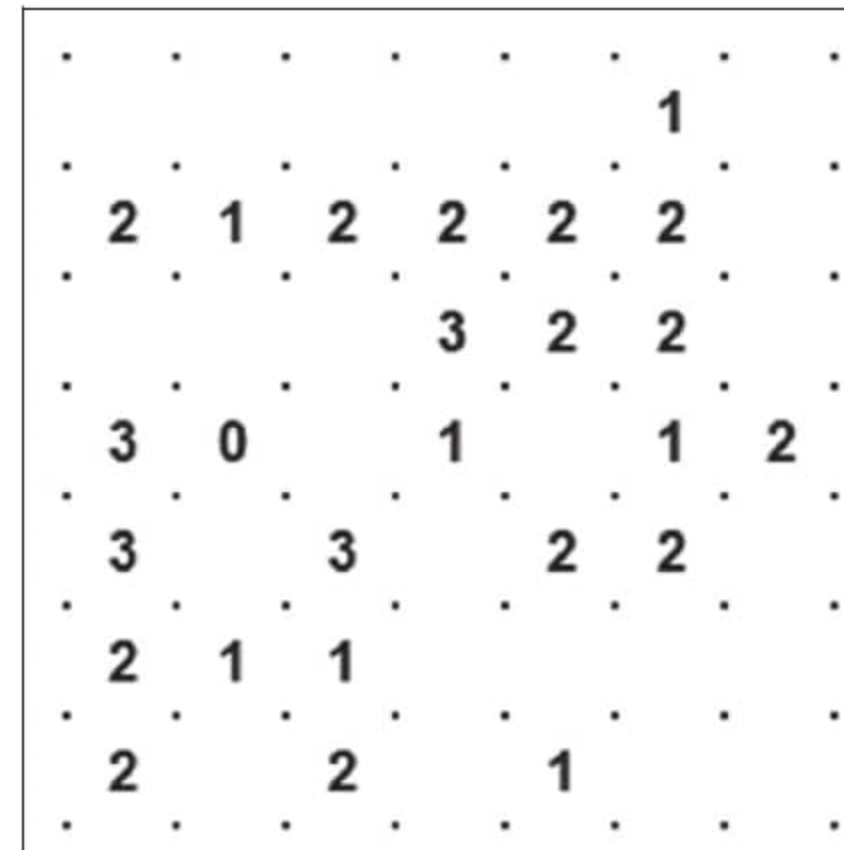
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



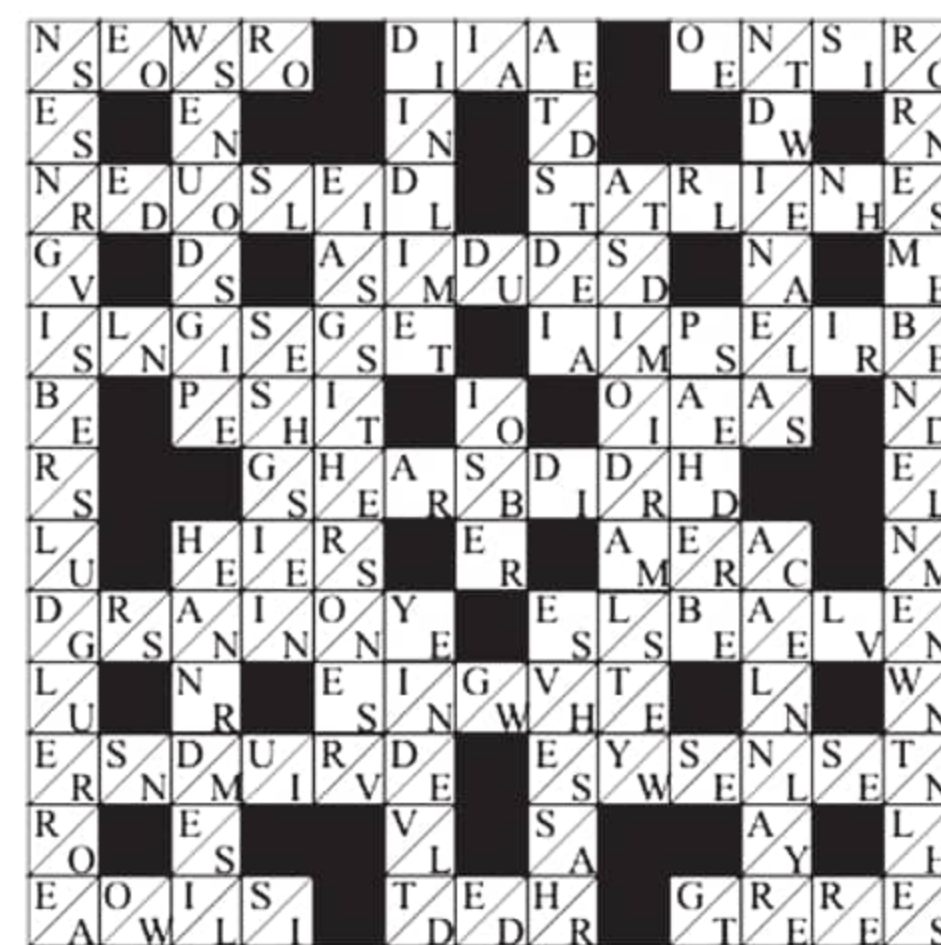
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



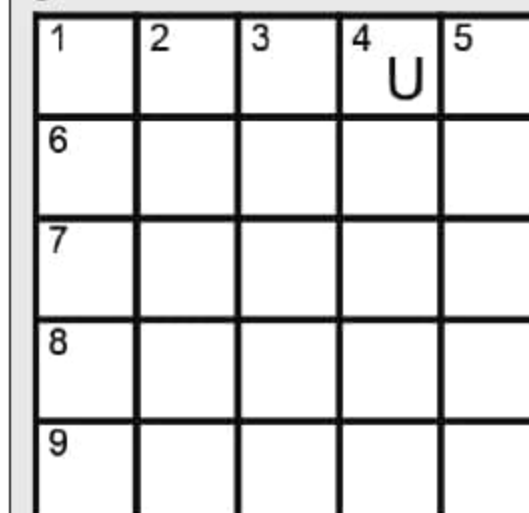
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? On your marks, get set...



ACROSS

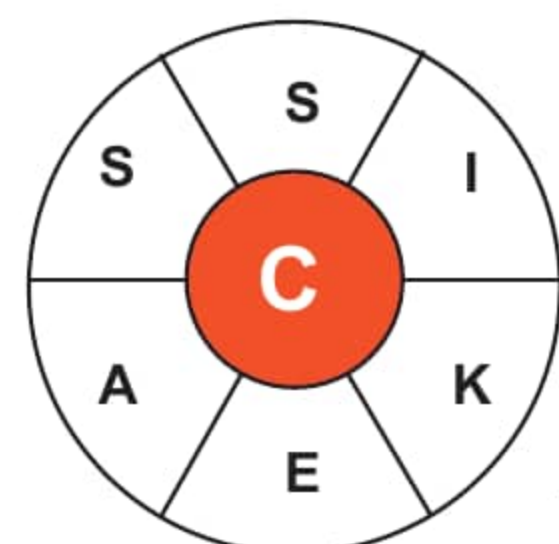
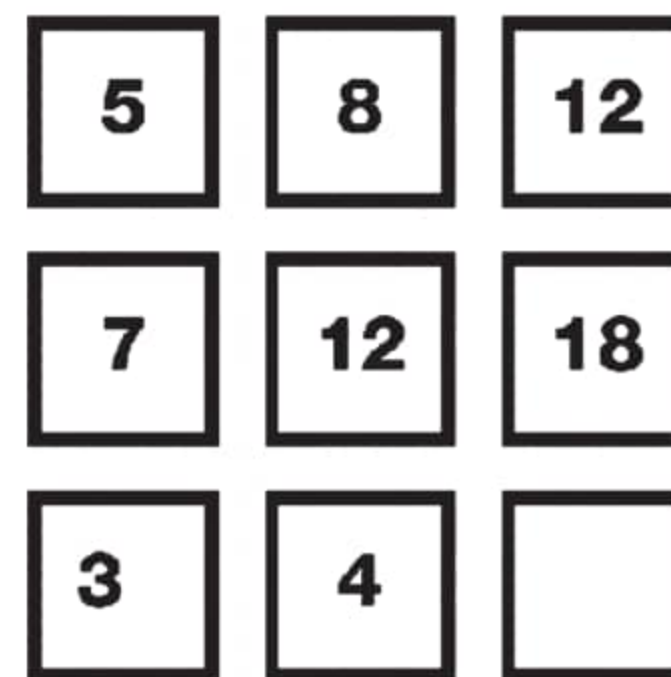
- 1 Curbs; 6 At lee;
- 7 Got at; 8 Throe;
- 9 Herds

DOWN

- 1 Gesso; 2 Hot CL;
- 3 Hater; 4 Re tut;
- 5 Bread

Mensapuzzle

Which letter goes in the empty segment?



Bull's eye

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

03 Average; 04 Good; 05 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge



To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



Easy

$\square \square \square \square = 7$

$\square \square \square \square = 25$

$\square \square \square \square = 27$

$\square \square \square \square = 27$

$\square \square \square \square = 27$

$\square \square \square \square = 27$

Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Nose is smaller. 2. Arm is not showing. 3. Window is wider. 4. Table is wider. 5. Hair is shorter. 6. Bracelet is added.

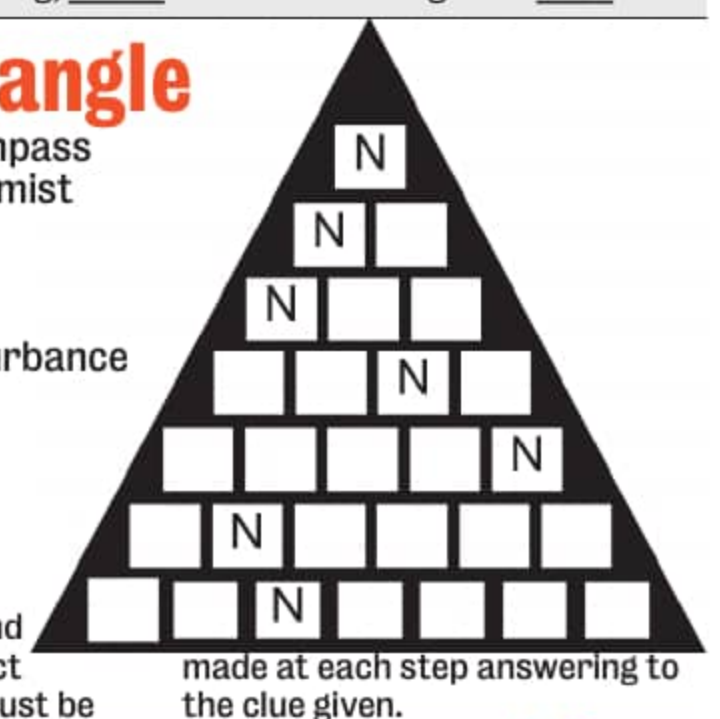
Riddler

Each of the following sentences has three missing words. The first missing word of each sentence is 6 letters long, the second missing word is 5 letters long, and the third missing word is 4 letters long. All the 6 letter words are anagrams of each other, as are all the 5 letter words, and all the 4 letter words. Can you fill in the blanks? 1) Nobody would ____ to the old pirate any more, because his ____ were far too _____. 2) The fans were ____ as the opposition managed to the game from the home _____. 3) When he decided to _____, he did not expect _____ bread with his _____ every meal. 4) On many of the lake's _____ in the Spring, _____ will be out looking for a _____.

Alpha triangle

- 1 North on the compass
- 2 Neon for the chemist
- 3 Catch
- 4 Shredded
- 5 Severe
- 6 Discontent, disturbance
- 7 Monastery clip

Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be

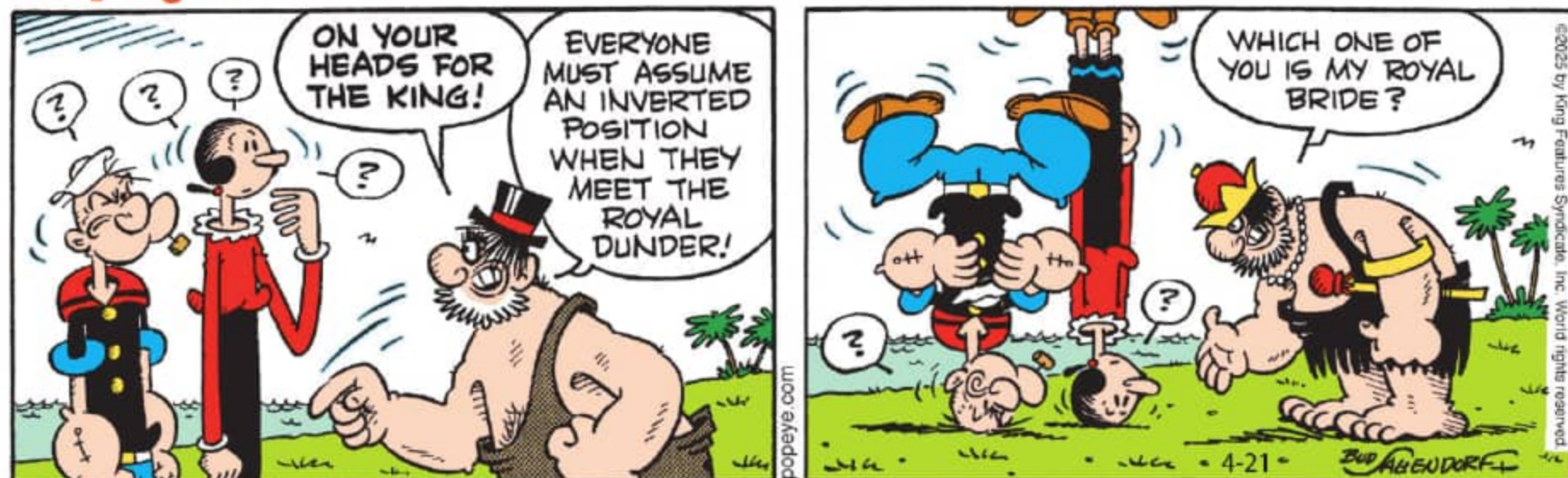


made at each step answering to the clue given.

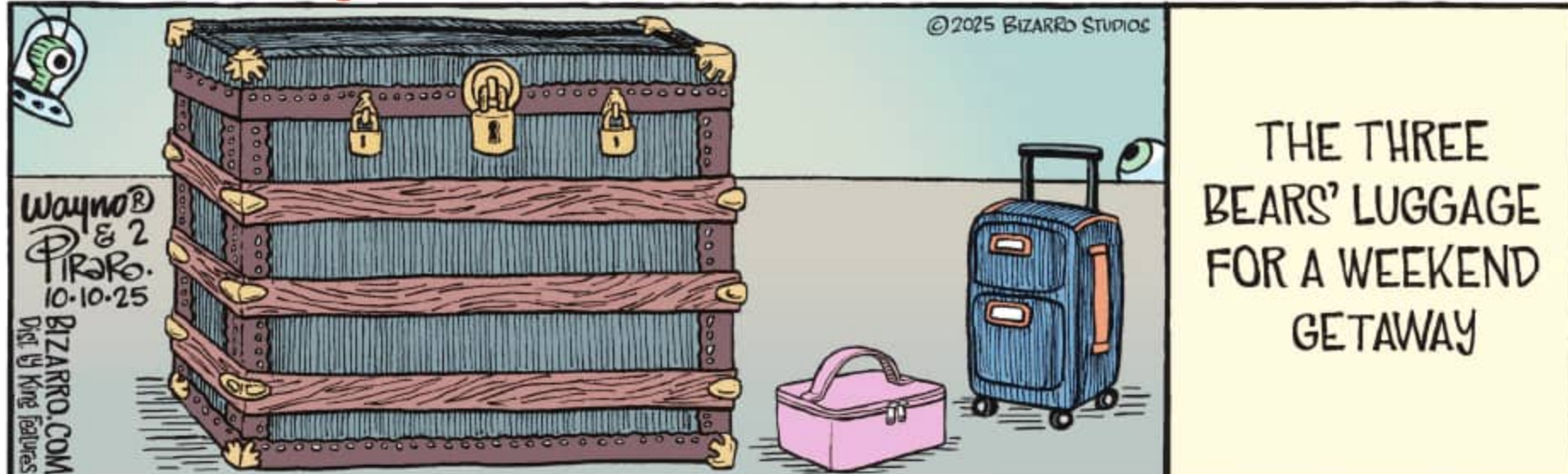
DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye



Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil



Hart of the city



Crankshaft



Mutts



WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR



If it's your birthday today

Happy Birthday! This new year marks the true beginning of a cycle of intense innovation and visionary thinking. Your social circle expands dramatically, connecting you with powerful influencers. Your unique ideas will find a platform and success. Commit to your future vision; your ability to inspire groups is your greatest asset.

Aries Mar 21-Apr 20



A refreshing dietary shift improves well-being. Plans, for meaningful purchases feel exciting. Recognition from seniors boosts confidence. Family events bring joy. Warm invitations strengthen connections.

Leo Jul 24 - Aug 23



Relaxation eases worries and lifts well-being. Financial planning supports new ventures. Adjusting your workplace approach brings success. Travel plans require careful attention. Confidence grows through progress.

Sagittarius Nov 23-Dec 22



Balanced meals restore well-being. New income brings comfort. Leadership strengthens your position at work. Family gatherings feel joyful. Visitors bring happiness.

Taurus Apr 21-May 20



Helpful exercise guidance enhances fitness today. Work feels smooth and manageable. Family visits bring warmth. Negotiation skills secure promising agreements. Quiet getaways create peaceful clarity.

Virgo Aug 24-Sep 23



Healthy discipline strengthens your body. Financial balance requires patience. Taking initiative moves work forward. Family offers steady comfort. Professional travel flows smoothly. Property decisions align well.

Capricorn Dec 23-Jan 20



Consistent care improves health. Wise decisions protect your savings. Business opportunities expand positively. Family moments bring joy. Outings feel refreshing. Property investments offer strong value.

Gemini May 21-Jun 21



Balanced habits uplift wellness. Creative methods help secure needed funds. Thoughtful planning prevents risk in business dealings. Family harmony may require patience. Travel preparations bring success.

Libra Sep 24-Oct 22



Refreshing breaks strengthen wellness. Financial chances increase. Breakthroughs boost your confidence professionally. Family news brings joy. Students progress with sincere interest. Travel inspires optimism.

Aquarius Jan 21-Feb 19



Healthy choices support steady growth. Professional recognition boosts motivation. Creative expression at home inspires admiration. Travel plans flourish beautifully. Property possibilities expand.

Cancer Jun 22-July 23



Consistent exercise strengthens your energy. Overseas opportunities grow brighter with determined effort. Work colleagues appreciate your guidance. Family support enhances comfort in new environments.

Scorpio Oct 23-Nov 22



Mindful wellness supports balance today. Financial wisdom strengthens security. Clear leadership helps you guide workplace matters. Home harmony improves. Travel abroad feels promising.

Pisces Feb 20-Mar 20



Balanced nutrition strengthens vitality. Finances improve steadily. Workplace praise elevates your spirit. Family bonding grows meaningful and warm. Travel brings joyful memories. Property ventures prosper.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



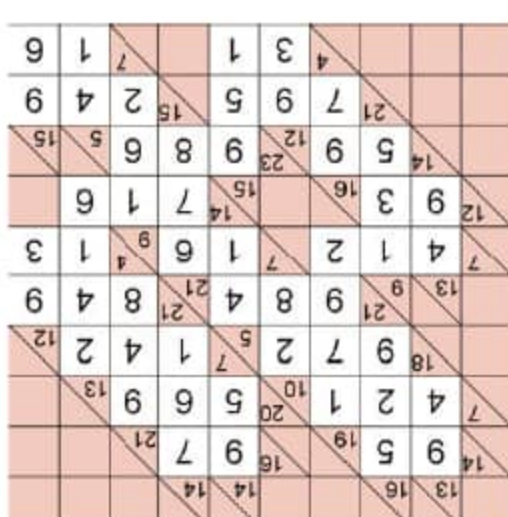
Nagvani, Bengaluru



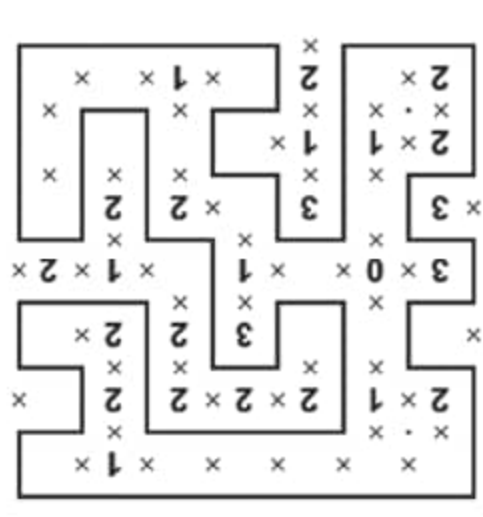
Dhanush, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011; Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS



KAKURO



LOOP



ALPHA



SUDOKU

PUZZLE
1. Letters in opposite segments of the circle are the same distance from the start of the alphabet as the other letter is from the end.
BULL'S EYE
cake, case, sick, sack, SEASICK.



QUICK



STRIKE OUT



FAST FIVE

QUOTE
He that is good for himself is good for nothing.
UNQUOTE
making excuses is seldom good for anything else.



Sikandar's script shuffle

Rashmika Mandanna opens up about changes in script over course of filming 'Sikandar'

Rashmika Mandanna featured in the Salman Khan starrer 'Sikandar', directed by AR Murugadoss. The movie failed to pull the audience to the theatres. It even landed in controversy after the filmmaker made comments on Khan's work etiquette, and the superstar replied to the same on an episode of his show 'Bigg Boss'. Now, Rashmika opened up about why she signed the movie and how the story was changed over the course of filming. Let's learn more in detail.

Rashmika addresses the 'Sikandar' debacle

In an interview with Telugu journalist Perna, Rashmika Mandanna expressed that the narration of 'Sikandar' was different from what actually was filmed on the sets. She said, "Sikandar, I remember talking to Murugadoss sir; of course, later what happened was very different... But when I heard the script, it was indeed quite a different script."

Rashmika elaborated on the same, stating that such changes in the scripts happen with movies. She shared, "When you listen to something, it is one story that you have listened to... But over the making of the film, things change according to the performances, according to the edits,

according to the time of the release." The 'Pushpa' actress stated that changes in the script over the course of filming are quite "common." She concluded, saying, "So that happened with Sikandar."

A clip from her interview was posted on Reddit, and soon, it garnered a lot of opinions in the comment section. Netizens expressed that Salman Khan and Rashmika Mandanna had zero chemistry and nothing could have saved the film.

More about 'Sikandar'

Salman Khan fans had pinned their hopes on the AR Murugadoss-directed film 'Sikandar'. However, it failed at the box office, leaving the superstar's fans disappointed. According to Sacnilk, the movie earned over Rs 185 crore at the worldwide box office. Meanwhile, the reported budget of the film was Rs 200 crore. Addressing the film on 'Bigg Boss 19' while interacting with comedian Ravi Gupta, Salman Khan shared that he doesn't regret doing 'Sikandar', as the plot of the movie was good.

— ETimes

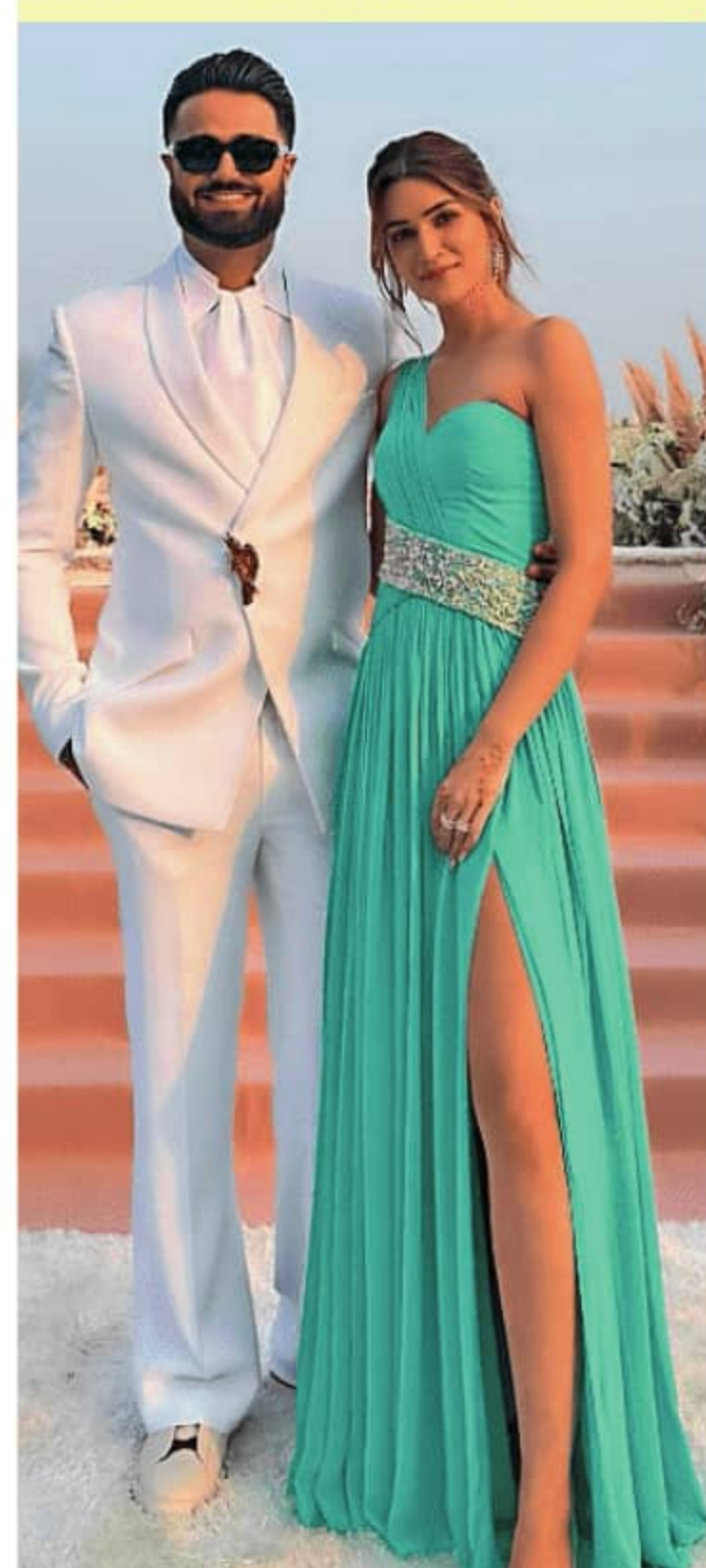
Anees Bazmee's new film to star Akshay and Vidya

Filmmaker Anees Bazmee is gearing up to roll his next directorial from January 20 in Mumbai. The director spoke about the yet-untitled project, confirming that it brings together Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan in key roles. Opening up about collaborating once again with Akshay Kumar in a recent interview, Anees Bazmee shared how the duo has a love for each other.

In a recent interaction with Avanti Films, Anees Bazmee shared, "However we continued bumping into each other and our bond remained intact. When I got the story of this film and realised it would be apt for Akshay ji, I approached him. He loved the story. He's very excited about it. We begin shooting for the film on January 20." When asked whether the film's title has been finalised, the director was clear in his response. "No, we haven't thought of a title yet," he said, adding that the team is currently focused on the shoot rather than naming the project.

— ETimes

Kriti seen with rumoured beau



Kriti Sanon has been rumoured to be dating Kabir Bahia for a while now. Netizens have been quick to observe even as they shared photos from the same location while being on a holiday. Recently, as Kriti's sister Nupur Sanon got married to long-term boyfriend Stebin Ben, Kriti and Kabir were spotted arriving at the airport in the same car. The wedding took place in Udaipur in the presence of close friends and family. Kabir has now dropped pictures from the festivities. His photo with Kriti alone has grabbed the maximum eyeballs.

In a carousel of photos shared by Kabir, in the first picture, he can be seen with Dinesh Vijan and 'Stree 2' director Amar Kaushik. The third slide sees him and Kriti make a gorgeous pair. While the 'Mimi' actress opted for a teal gown, Kabir wore an all-white outfit and looked dapper. According to reports, Kriti's outfit was designed by the bride herself, Nupur Sanon. News18 confirmed that Kriti's teal-green gown was created by a fashion label launched by Nupur in collaboration with their mother. — ETimes



Poster launch

Actor Chetan, known for Kannada movie 'Aadinagalu', unveiled the title and poster of forthcoming movie 'Tiklu Rama'. Appreciating the quality of the poster and uniqueness of the title, Chetan said that the movie belongs to the comedy genre, but it conveys a message to society.

"Only a director like Manju Kavi can handle the megaphone for such a movie. The director has succeeded in having a good team. I wish good luck to the cast and crew of the movie," said Chetan.

The movie is backed by Shruthi GB and Komala Nataraj under the Karishma-Shravya Combines banner.

Dr Rajkumar's grandson Shanmuga Govindaraj and producer CS Venkatesh also attended the launch of the movie's title and poster at MMB Legacy.

The movie features Dr Rajveer, Sangeetha, Mithra, Bhagyashree, Shruthi B, Govinde Gowda, Vinod Gobbarala, Suchendra Prasad, Mandy Siddu, and Pavithra.

"The hero character has two shades," said Dr Rajveer.

